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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 21, 2011

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West Valley City Mayor and Council Announce West Valley City Transparency Standard

West Valley City – Today Mayor Mike Winder and the West Valley City Council announced a seven-point *West Valley City Transparency Standard*, an initiative aimed at making West Valley City the most accessible and transparent municipality in the state. Representatives from the Sutherland Institute and the Utah Foundation for Open Government (UFOG) were present, supporting West Valley City's efforts.

"Our bosses, the people of West Valley City, demand that we operate as honestly and open as possible, and rightly so" said Mayor Winder. "These points are a message to them about how seriously we take this important issue."

The seven points of the *West Valley City Transparency Standard* are:

1. West Valley City has a long and rich history of being more open than state GRAMA laws require, and this tradition will continue. Texts, instant messages, and other electronic communications will still be considered public documents in our city.
2. We will continue to make government employee salaries and wages, and who those wages are going to, public, and feel that the people should know what they are paying those who work for them.
3. The Mayor and Council's schedule of public events shall be made public and posted on the city website.
4. All city elected officials on Facebook commit to keep their privacy settings as "open" so that in this popular social media setting their conversations will be public.
5. Because transparency is especially critical in campaign finances, we will change the "may" to a "shall" in our ordinances, so that those who fail to submit their campaign financial disclosures on time shall be removed from the ballot.
6. Occasionally the taxpayer is stuck footing the bill for large GRAMA records requests such as when a developer in 2004 required West Valley City to conduct a records gathering job that consumed \$30,000 for which the city was only able to collect \$10,000. We appreciate the Utah Legislature working on developing reasonable charges as part of the state GRAMA program that protects both the taxpayer and the right of the free flow of information in a free society.
7. We have worked with the Sutherland Institute to meet all ten of their recommendations for an open and transparent municipal website, becoming one of the first cities in the state to receive an A+ rating.

"We applaud Mayor Winder and West Valley City for taking the issue of transparency very seriously, especially on their website," said Paul Mero, President of the Sutherland Institute. "Good government is fostered when citizens can easily access critical information and know what their government is up to."

"The Utah Foundation for Open Government applauds West Valley City's launching of this new open government initiative," said UFOG President Linda Petersen. "Open and transparent government is good government. We encourage other communities in the Salt Lake Valley and throughout Utah to follow suit and to bring local government out into the sunshine. The people have a right to know and understand how they are governed and WVC officials understand that."

More information about the West Valley City Transparency Standard can be found at www.wvc-ut.gov/transparency.

Mayor Winder's complete remarks from today's event can be found at www.wvc-ut.gov/mayor.

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